

Virginia DEQ Non-Agency Data Initiative

How The Virginia Department Of
Environmental Quality Uses Water
Quality Data From Outside Sources

Background



- The Non-Agency Data Initiative is an effort by DEQ to identify any and all usable water quality data in order to increase the percentage of assessed waters in Virginia
- Va. 2004 305(b) Assessment = 99% estuaries, 85% significant lakes, 22% rivers and streams assessed
- In August 2004, DEQ started a new staff position to serve as the DEQ Water Quality Data Liaison (WQDL)
- The role of the WQDL is to pursue and review data from non-DEQ organizations/agencies, including citizen monitoring groups, to expand DEQ monitoring coverage

Water Quality Data Liaison's Duties

- Identify, request, and review any available non-DEQ generated water quality monitoring data
- Promote Quality Assurance/Quality Control
- Provide technical assistance to citizen monitoring groups and support water monitoring events
- Administer the DEQ Citizen Monitoring Grant Program
- Actively participate on the Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC)

Uses for Non-Agency Water Quality Monitoring Data

- 305(b) Water Quality Assessment
- 303(d) Impaired Waters List (became eligible for this beginning in 2004)
- Identify pollution concerns for follow-up monitoring
- Help identify water quality improvement (i.e. during TMDL implementation monitoring)

How DEQ Reviews Non-Agency Data

- QA all submitted data
- Data submitters must have DEQ approved protocols and a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)
- Laboratories must pass QA/QC inspection



Citizen volunteer recording stream conditions- Courtesy of the Piedmont Region TMDL Initiative

Categories for Non-Agency Data

- Level III - approved by DEQ- (Approved QAPP, and use DEQ approved methodologies)
 - Data used in both 305 (b) assessment and 303(d) list
- Level II- partially approved-(Approved QAPP, use similar but not DEQ or EPA approved methodologies)
 - Could be used for 305(b) assessment purposes but not 303(d) Listing as alternative methodologies may not be as accurate
- Level I- not approved- (no DEQ approved QAPP or methodologies)
 - Data may be used by DEQ to identify sites that may need follow up monitoring by DEQ

Who DEQ Currently Works With

- 156 citizen monitoring and non-profit organizations
- 22 Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- 19 State and Federal agencies
- 17 counties and other local governments
- 14 colleges and universities

DEQ has received non-agency data that covers over 900 separate locations for the 2006 assessment report

Citizen Involvement

- Annual requests are made for citizens to nominate state waters for DEQ follow up monitoring
- Every two years, citizens and non-DEQ organizations, submit water quality data to DEQ to help target areas for future monitoring



DEQ Director Bob Burnley speaking at a community involvement meeting with local citizens

VWMC

- Formed in 1999 to be a forum for individuals and organizations interested in water quality
- Members consist of citizens, government agencies, industry and wastewater organizations
- VWMC “Inventory Committee” chaired by DEQ in 2005
- Inventory will identify who is performing the monitoring and their contact information along with what is being monitored
- Inventory’s completion expected in August 2005
- To learn more: <http://www.vwrrc.vt.edu/vwmc>

Future Plans

- Promote new “VPDES Voluntary Monitoring Initiative”
- Finalize DEQ QA/QC guidance in 2005 for non-agency biological data (based on established guidance in CA, PA, KY)
- Use a portion of supplemental 106 Grant funds to develop a non-agency database in 2006
- DEQ has applied for NEIEN grant to develop non-agency web portal to enable other groups to upload their data into EPA STORET

VPDES Voluntary Monitoring Initiative

- Voluntary monitoring program with waste water treatment plants and other VPDES dischargers
- VPDES dischargers monitor upstream of their discharge points using their own equipment and personnel
- Data submitted annually and reviewed by DEQ
- Could significantly add to the total number of non-DEQ monitoring stations in Virginia
- Full statewide implementation in 2006

Increasing Use Of Non-agency Data In Virginia's 305(b) Assessment

- 2006 - Approved non-agency chemical data to be used for 303(d) List of impairments
- 2008 - Voluntary data upstream from VPDES facilities will be incorporated into the assessment
 - New biological review guidelines will be used to increase utility of non-agency biological data
- 2010 - Local government water quality monitoring data projected for inclusion in the assessment

Contact Information

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Thank You